



Missoula City-County Health Department

HEALTH SERVICES

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SENATE

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Exhibit No. 5

Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Safety Committee
Montana Legislature
Helena, Montana

Bill No. HB 305

April 10, 2015

Re: Testimony in support of HB 305 revising laws related to protecting Montana's children

Honorable Chairman Thomas and Members of the Committee:

Missoula City-County Health Department (MCCHD) has a long-standing collaborative relationship with Child and Family Services Division (CFSD). Public Health Nurses (PHNs) offer a range of family support for pregnant women, infants, and children, ideally in their home environment.

In November 2011, MCCHD launched the Missoula Foster Child Health Home Visiting Program (MFCHP) that pairs a specialized PHN with foster children and their families to assist with navigating the complex medical care system. Fragmented health care is both costly and ineffective. The PHN provides intensive care management to assure medical continuity as children enter care, move between placements or are referred to additional services.

The PHN accomplishes this by working with the CFSD case-worker and foster parent:

- Collecting and summarizing all medical, dental and behavioral health records that move with the child through the foster care system regardless of placement changes.
- Identifying or establishing an appropriate medical and dental home and following up with foster families to assure that referrals are made and appointments are kept.
- Assuring a complete and accurate immunization record.
- When a child changes placements, serving as a "bridge" to assure each foster family has an accurate understanding of the child's health history and current needs.

These services benefit the foster child and all those involved in their care by:

- Reducing duplication of diagnostic, screening and treatment services leading to reduced costs.
- Ensuring appropriate team members are aware of the child's unique needs (e.g. prescribed medications, acute and/or chronic medical conditions).
- Assisting families to understand Medicaid, locate providers, and access additional resources.
- Monitoring progress on care plans and recommendations.
- Assuring unlicensed kinship foster parents understand and meet the healthcare needs of the child.

Through the successful partnership between CFSD and MCCHD, over the past 2.5 years, 352 Missoula County foster children and their families have been served generating over 1,650 individual client encounters. We are making a real difference in the lives of the children and families we serve.

Ongoing, sustainable funding is vital to assure that partnerships like the MFCHP can continue to serve our highest risk Montana children and their families. On behalf of Missoula City-County Health Department, we request the committee remove the one-time-only (OTO) fund designation and support HB 305.

Sincerely,

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